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Ontario. Employment Equity Act, '93

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JUNE 25, 1992

ZIEMBA INTRODUCES EMPLOYMENT EQUITY LEGISLATION

TORONTO - Minister of Citizenship Elaine Ziemba today introduced mandatory employment equity legislation for Ontario. The legislation will enable Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, racial minorities and women to participate fully in the economic opportunities of this province and to contribute to the economic renewal of Ontario.

"Employment equity makes sound business sense, and it's fair," said Ms. Ziemba before tabling the bill in the Ontario Legislature. "Ontario's most valuable resource is its people. The designated groups represent 60 percent of Ontario's labour force. We cannot afford to under-utilize or ignore the vast human potential that exists in this province. Together, Ontarians can build a society able to take on the challenges of the future."

Employment equity is good human resource planning. It will remove barriers to full participation in the workplace for members of the designated groups.

"Accessing the talents and abilities of this substantial pool of qualified people is simply good management, and essential to competing in a global economy," said the Minister. "We intend to work closely with the business community to maximize the many tangible benefits of employment equity."

The employment equity bill sets out varying degrees of requirements for employers in different sectors. The Ontario Public Service, broader public sector employers (ie. hospitals, universities) with 50 or more employees and private sector employers with 100 or more employees, will be subject to full requirements, including: a workforce analysis to determine the present status of their employees; a review of formal and informal employment practices to identify any that may be discriminatory; and the development and implementation of an employment equity plan.

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Streamlined requirements will be developed for broader public sector employers with 10 to 49 employees, and private sector employers with 50 to 99 employees. The government will also give special consideration to the unique circumstances of particular sectors or industries, such as the construction industry.

The effect of the legislation on Aboriginal workplaces will be determined through government to government discussions with Aboriginal peoples.

The legislation will be phased-in as follows: 12 months after proclamation of the Employment Equity Act for the Ontario Public Service; 18 months after proclamation for the broader public sector; and 18 to 36 months after proclamation for private employers, depending on their size.

The legislation being tabled today is based on a foundation of extensive, province-wide consultation. From December 1991 to February 1992, Employment Equity Commissioner Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré held public hearings and forums in nine cities, listening to the views of the private and broader public sector, labour unions, designated group organizations, various interest groups and individuals. Over 400 written briefs were received. The government was further guided in its deliberations by an advisory committee, chaired by Minister Ziemba, comprising business, labour and community leaders.

The government will continue to pursue a co-operative and inclusive approach in developing employment equity regulations. An advisory group, chaired by the employment equity commissioner and including representatives of business, labour and designated groups, will work with the government to draft practical and realistic regulations by this fall.

A comprehensive process will be initiated to implement employment equity legislation. An employment equity commission will be established, as an arm's length agency, to support employers in achieving employment equity objectives. Affected employers will be required to report to the Commission on such matters as the results of their workforce survey, quantitative and qualitative data to indicate changes in workforce composition and employment practices, and certification that an employment equity plan has been developed in accordance with legislation.

An employment equity tribunal will also be established to hear complaints and adjudicate disputes. It will have the power to mediate and settle cases or proceed to hearings. Non-compliance with an order of the tribunal will be an offence, subject to a maximum fine of $50,000.

Further information on employment equity legislation is available to the public by calling : In Toronto, 314-0016, (TDD) 314-0011; outside Toronto, call toll-free 1-800-567-0356, (TDD) 1-800-663-2534.

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Ce texte est disponible en français.

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